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Title: Audra Winter-the social value of "drama" content, and self-protective behaviour

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Transcript

0:00
Big on the Nana this week. Hello friends and welcome back to the channel. Can you
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tell I don't have an intro yet? I'll figure something out. This week I am
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coming back to do a followup on Audra Winter to some extent, possibly as a
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case study more than anything else, and to talk really about the nature of drama
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content going viral. what happens when you go viral for all the wrong reasons.
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I thought what I would do is have a little bit of a discussion around that. I'm going to use her situation as a case
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study. This is some research I actually did a while ago, not official research,
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but something I did informally a while ago. knew about the studies that I'm going to mention and I thought they shed
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light on why we like drama content in particular why well no I'm justifying
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myself here why I particularly have become interested in drama the people
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who are involved in these scandals that happen online and how that's changed
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over the years so yeah I am uh justifying my interest in sitting and
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watching this material over and over again when I'm too exhausted to do anything else.
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So, we're going to look at the desire to go viral, which was a big part of
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Audra's life and is very common now on social media. There are different
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statistics kind of floating around. Different people do different organizations do surveys intermittently

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and those surveys are of variable quality because it depends on the questions and how they're being asked.
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Young people thinking that you can go viral really easily and that that's going to set you up for fame and
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fortune. So I'm going to discuss that. Uh all of this is kind of around um me
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doing some work on supporting a course on digital society next semester. So,
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uh, it actually is part of my work and I'm going to talk about how authors
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communicate with their audience a little bit. We're going to discuss social and cultural context and importance of drama
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with some hopefully background research and reaction channels, some case studies, particularly obviously because
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being an author, I think it's a useful one to look at how not to do things. And
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right at the end, I might just have a little look at the writing that she's put out there. A little bit of a
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personal thing. Coming back to this, I did the original video without a plan
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to turn the channel into anything. I did actually kind of have a secret ambition
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that I thought it would be fun to put my academic research onto the internet. I
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wasn't officially planning to do this launch with oh my god I'm going to do
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this huge thing and um I really felt that I didn't have the time and that I
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my editing skills aren't up to par. I couldn't really take advantage when the
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video went accidentally kind of mini viral. Like I the creators that I follow
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all have, you know, hundreds of thousands to millions of followers and they do videos that produce huge amounts
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of content. So I wasn't expecting to get as at the moment
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I think it's 22,000 views. That really shocked me. I thought
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I would get 50 and nobody would notice and I could go away and hide in my corner. And then it just blew up. And
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honestly, the impact is not something you can describe unless
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you've actually been through it. I should try, shouldn't I? I'm a writer. It was buzzy and weird and I couldn't
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concentrate on anything. I was trying to do what I thought was the right thing in
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terms of replying to all the comments that were coming in. I was in the process of having boiler replaced on the
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day that it really blew up. And so I was sitting in a room with a guy who kept coming in and out doing things with our
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meter and it was really strange. So I think at one point I was just like, "Please just stop world. I just I can't
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deal with this." It was small compared to
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what Audra was hoping for. So, she was hoping for millions of views on Tik Tok. And I
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think that there is a conversation to be had around the way that going viral and
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being huge on the internet has changed the way we think about people and what
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you can do with your life in lots of different ways. I was just completely
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blown away. I do want to say thank you. Obviously, the comments were amazing and
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so positive. I have grown up being I was horrendously
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bullied at school. I'm really nervous about putting myself out there. I'm fine in front of students for an hour. I I
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will lecture quite happily, but it is nerve-wracking to put myself on the internet out there on a video and then
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have so many lovely responses. It was a real surprise and kind of awesome. And
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thank you to everyone who's still watching and commenting and has subscribed. So, you're all amazing.
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I will just link to that first video and uh we'll start with an update on what order has been doing. Uh, it's been
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followed mostly by book lover Laura, who has been keeping everybody up to date on the strange things that have been
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happening since then. I'll also link to Reads with Rachel, her review of the situation and the book. Then the queer
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reader, who has done a two-parter on the book itself and its plot. John at Full
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Staff Books and the Cozy Creative have both done videos on the situation from my kind of age group perspective, which
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is a bit older. both coming down broadly on the side of the tradition of the author spaces not being to dunk on
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authors or get involved in drama. So I'm potentially breaking that rule there.
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But I'm really interested in how order of situation could be used as an example
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of the role drama content can play socially and culturally as cautionary
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tales. how we talk to audiences and how we push back against unethical
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behavior that breaches community guidelines but is not necessarily going to get picked up by the mainstream
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authorities. Now, initially I was actually going to go back to John Ronson's book from the 2010s, uh, So
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You've Been Publicly Shamed, which is an exploration of the lives of various individuals who went through massive
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callouts in the early 2010s on Twitter. Now, John Ronson is a great writer and
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journalist from South Manchester. He's from Yew. And I love his work. He's really funny. He's a great comedian. He is very
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compassionate. He's done several fascinating podcasts, one that follows sex work and
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explorations of that in the states. He's really interesting guy. Now, the book he
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wrote is fascinating. However, the culture has shifted
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dramatically from where it was when the book was researched, written, and published. So John Ronson deals mostly
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with people who had one big blowout bad moment.
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Think the big one is the Justine one where she just put one horrendous tweet
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about going to South Africa and she arrived and in that time the internet
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had picked it up and it was it went horrendous. it would just I mean it was a terrible tweet and horrible
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but he covers that story. So he deals with what happens to people after that
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but very much in the context of what that the culture was like in the 2010s.
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Now even going viral for positive reasons has a huge mental health impact.
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I felt that I could not function for a few weeks. I had just put out a video
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which was just like I just I think I have something to say about this, but it wasn't a and I've got 10 videos lined up
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for the next 10 weeks to build my channel and do all the rest of that and get monetized. I was just like this is
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what I want to say and I'm going to go for it. Um, Jason Russell, who's the man behind
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the Coney 2012 viral moment, had a full-on mental breakdown and spent time
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in hospital at the absolute peak of the video's popularity. We are not, as human
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beings designed for that level of attention,
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whether it is positive or negative. I think Audra's example is a very good
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case study in looking at how chasing that kind of viral moment can make you
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feel really good. You feel really good having that positive attention, but if
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you don't have something to follow up with, it's very ephemeral and it just
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disappears within a moment. And then if you go viral again and you get a lot of
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attention and then it goes wrong, which is what happened in this case, you are

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left with a terrible situation that is really, really difficult to navigate.
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And it's honestly the thing that terrifies me. You know, what if I made a mistake? As somebody who is autistic,
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which means that I struggle with social communication, with reading the room, and that is any room, which includes the
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YouTube room and the room when I go outside, I
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really do end up being scared all the time that I'm going to make a mistake that I won't see coming. And I have
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become someone who tends to read and research excessively. and I've been anxious about putting out videos again
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in case I make some kind of horrific mistake. Now, I'm a fan of both Kiki Chanel and
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Swell Entertainment, and they've both done recent videos a few times on
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another side of going viral, which is one quite relevant to Orudra, and that is the idea of seeking it out because
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it's going to be lifechanging, and that if you become big enough, you will
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somehow be able to escape the horrendous rat race. Anyone who's seen severance
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will know that that is a perfect portrayal of what corporate life is like
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doing a regular job. You will be able to earn an income that will support you in
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what are really unstable and difficult times. I can see the appeal. Like I'm an
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author. I'm I'm supposed to want lots of people to look at my work, but the idea also simultaneously terrifies me. Kiki
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and Amanda both have focused on how people tend to think that blowing up
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like that will lead to big financial changes and enable you to completely
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change your life. The most recent salient example is hubs life who gained
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this huge following because he did boring content about having a boring life. I believe he had tried to be a

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content creator in the past. It hadn't worked out. So he started doing these very calm,
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very quiet videos where he was just preparing to go to his everyday job. He went and worked in an office. He was
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just videoing himself, putting his things in his bag, going to work, going to lunch, going to do more work, and
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then going home. And he blew up on that. He developed an audience who were all
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people who have to do that. The problem for Hub's life is he got a
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big following and he decided that he would quit the boring job that was
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actually providing him with the content and he ended up thinking that he could make money online being a content
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creator. He initially lied to his audience, I believe, by hiring an office
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and just sitting in it and pretending that he wasn't doing what he was doing, which obviously breaches that essential
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trust that we are trying to develop as people making content on the internet so
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that as an audience, you will trust the person that you're listening to and develop I mean, we're talking about
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parasocial relationships, but you will develop a sense of trust that this person is reliable, that what they're
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saying is the truth and that you can kind of depend on them for that sort of
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emotional resonance as well. But he lost all of that because he lied to his
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audience. I don't want to think about what he's doing now. Quite frankly, the
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problem is that on YouTube and all of these other social media networks,
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watching videos is free and the conversion is very low. So, you're not necessarily going to get what you want
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out of creating content if the end result is making millions and being able
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to quit your really really stressful job. I'll just pause and say I did get

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monetized probably as a result of that video. I am the example from book lover
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Laura says at one point you know this drama has launched people's YouTube
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careers particularly the queer reader has been able to take off I'm you know I'm super proud of them for being able
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to do that I think that's fantastic it is challenging we're going to get into that in a little bit I was just
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monetized last week but it is tiny my main motivation is to talk to people
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about my research and the work that I do because I think it's fun and interesting
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and I very rarely get to talk about it to be quite honest. I' I've been invited to do a talk next year but I don't get
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to talk about it very often and it is just nice academics we love to talk about the stuff that we do now
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has fallen into the same sort of trap as
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Hub's life. She has spent a long time trying to go viral to emulate the success she thought
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she'd get from this earlier viral moment that she had. And I think if she had
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already got a completed book that was really, really good, highly edited, very
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polished, and available and ready to be bought already, it would have triggered the kind of success that she wanted.
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Since the fallout from what has happened in August, things have gotten very
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weird. This is a pattern that I've seen a lot
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as someone who follows drama, especially with someone who is new to having
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something big happen. There are people who are just chronically trouble. And
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when something happens, you know, periodically they're boring for a really long time and then something big happens
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and everybody sits up and goes, "What are you doing?" We'll get to that as well. So put a pin
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in it after the fallout from the book going badly viral as bad and her
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responses measuring not measuring up to what the audience required.
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She initially said that she was going to update weekly that there would be a Q&A
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and she was using this rhetoric that is the team and we are doing things as if
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she were I don't know Apple Tim Cook I don't like
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to think about it it's uncomfortable that way of talking just doesn't feel
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right and I am going to talk about that pretty much everything she did made
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things worse. The weekly updates went for about 2 to 3 weeks. If I had been
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betting, I would have said, "Yeah, that's not going to last." And it didn't.
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That fell apart when the responses were mostly negative. And they released they
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she released a Q&A by the editor and it was bad. It dunked on other authors and
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we mentioned not dunking on authors, but published authors with a huge following.
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And we can have a whole conversation about the quality in FourthWing and
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Powerless and rant reviews that go on for hours about them. My favorite thing
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to watch while I'm cooking or doing the washing up. That's just not something
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you should do, especially when you are fighting to get back the audience's goodwill and people are now watching you
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and they are watching you critically. She then did this bizarre rebrand
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PR setup video where she kind of tried to reintroduce herself, but it was the same as everything else and it didn't
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make any sense whatsoever. She then stops updating
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after a couple of updates. She shifted her attention to Patreon. So, she hasn't updated Tik Tok for a number of weeks
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now, since the middle of August, and attempted to get more people to
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subscribe that way, presumably because she wasn't getting many people to buy into the second edition release. Most of
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that is artwork. Once a week there is a little bit of free material putting it
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behind a pay wall presumably part of the need to keep going
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financially. So she or somebody associated with hers attempted to get angel investment
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funding which just
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I keep thinking of this in terms of what if she was one of my students
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and I didn't realize that you could make that many bad decisions in so short a
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time, but it turns out that you can. Now, she has, as of writing, mostly
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handed off her Patreon to her team who are all artists apart from that one
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editor while she moves to Finland. Um, as a mumin person, I would love to move
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to Finland, but in context, this is just getting more scrutiny and it's unclear
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what's going on. There's lack of clarity around what's going on there. Wanting to
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be closer to Sley is one of the reasons Sorie is meant to be one of the important people's part of this.
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Spending three hours talking to him every night I think was the idea behind the original plan. None of this comes
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across well and it magnifies each stage of the process of doing something after
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a bad fallout can either make things better or they can make things worse and this has made things worse. There is a
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lack of perception of how things are coming across and a lack of thought going into how things are perceived. The
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audience is being ignored. And that is a big problem at this moment for anyone
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who's going through something like this, the moment the audience themselves and what they want is being fully ignored,
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that becomes a serious problem. And the lack of trust is you know you can't come

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back from that. Now I originally suggested that the best and only sensible course of action at a time like
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this is to follow the mode of the internet apology. I mentioned Mika's
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rhetoric as a very good examination of how apologies work and what you need to
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do as someone who is making an apology in order to restore the audience's
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trust. you're reaching out as an individual. It is necessary to be
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vulnerable, but also to appreciate that you have made a big mistake and you are
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seeking an extension of trust or you're putting
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out an olive branch to try to get that trust back by being vulnerable, by being
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prepared to acknowledge that you have made mistakes and that you maybe have caused harm.
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Now there is the issue of refunds which is complicated because I had spoken to
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Harry Legend. She commented on my Substack and I have to apologize for not
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responding but there is a potential issue with the refunds that goes beyond
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people not getting refunds for books they didn't like. I fully accept you should not really get refunds for a book
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just because you didn't like it. But there are people who potentially have not received the book that they've paid
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for. And that's a whole other can of worms that is potentially sitting
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out there. So I I don't know. Now, I did briefly look into the FTC guidelines
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around that, but obviously I don't want to level accusations that may be inaccurate because I'm not sure if
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people have not received books that they actually paid for.
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The thing is when you do something like this and when
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things fall down, everyone starts to scrutinize you.

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We are by nature as humans part of community and part of community means
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extending trust to other people even strangers because you have to be able to
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bring people into your community. So we are willing to extend trust to people.
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When I put my video out people were prepared to extend a particular level of
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trust to me and it's important to honor and respect that trust. So when things
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go wrong and everyone realizes that they can't trust
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you, they start to investigate you. I think there are limits to how much you can do there. I want to highlight that
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you should not go and dox her by her real name. You should not go to
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investigation her house or find her or
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try to engage with her or anyone associated with her directly. You should not do that.
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That is part of the audience holding itself to account in a situation like
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this. There are always going to be people who don't. And part of the problem with this
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method of handling situations on the internet is that
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you're reaching potentially hundreds of thousands of people who
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are all responsible for their own actions and may make choices that are
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actually detrimental. We're going to come back to that. I've got a lot of pins in things today. You have to think
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very carefully in situations like that about every move you make, everything
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that you do and how it's going to be received.
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I'm just thinking about the Lindsay Ella situation because she went through a a bad moment and people went as far as and
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there are bad faith actions and interpretations. You have to
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be very careful as an audience member about how you interpret certain things and being careful not to leap from here
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are some of the facts we have to wild speculation becoming fact. And increasingly in the true crime space,
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for example, we're seeing how audience members step outside the bounds of what is
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acceptable behavior. And even creators are stepping outside the bounds of what is acceptable behavior
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in terms of going and doing their own investigations and believing things and rumors spreading.
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As an audience member, as a creator, you have to step back and say, really, what
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can I say is true and what limits do I set on my own actions here? which is
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partly why it's taken me quite a long time to decide to do a second video and
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to think very carefully about how I framed it and what I wanted to say if I
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did a video at all. Now, some people are going to have empathy
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and extend that empathy a really long way. I very interesting that Audra has had a lot of empathy extended to her. I
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think potentially because the first time you kind of breach community ethical
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standards, there is a certain degree of willingness to give you the benefit of
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the doubt, shall we say, but that is contingent on social and cultural
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factors. So if you are young, you are white, we could probably also throw male
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in there for good measure, and you appeal to a similar group of people, they are going to extend you more
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empathy because that's the empathy they want to see extended to them,
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you also get the attention of people who will be absolutely merciless. And the longer a drama or a scandal goes on and
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the worse the creator at the heart of it responds to things, the worse things get
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and the more critical people become, the more angry they are and the more likely they are to do deep investigations
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because you've breached the trust and people do take it too far. Now, this is where we're going to come into the issue
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of scams and drama content. So back when John Ronson was writing going viral in
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the worst way did not really have the same monetary aspect to it. 10 years on
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post pandmic we are living in a time of just constant
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scams and having to be on your toes scam wise literally all of the time.
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Saying something dreadful on Twitter in 2012 is not the same thing as trying to sell a bad book on Tik Tok in 2025. It
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is also not the same thing as the endless rug pulls that are happening at a higher level. I mean, trying to sell a
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really bad book is one thing, but the level of scam that's going on lately is
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it's off the charts. Now adding that financial element to issues means that
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you are adding weight to the seriousness and also to the potential sort of value
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of drama content in that sense. So for this I dug into some research about the role of reaction and drama content on
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YouTube. This research I originally looked at when H Bomberg Guy released
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his video about James Summerton, the plagiarism and YouTube video, and he mentions drama content and he calls it
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the worst corner of YouTube and is extremely critical and there were a lot
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of people who were actually really annoyed by this and wanted to call out to say actually what we do has a social
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and cultural value. He is trying to highlight the the fact that people reproduce bad, poorly
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researched, speculative content that is purely based on vibes and does not
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contain accurate information just because they're trying to monetize and capitalize on a trending situation.

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They just want to make the money from views. the drama content creators pushed
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back because they felt that what they were doing was valuable either in their specific community or or on YouTube more
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generally. What drama videos and channels do within the broader community is that they hold
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creators and others to account when their behavior violates accepted norms
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or even break laws but are unlikely to face much in the way of accountability for that. In 2022, Rebecca Lewis and
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Angela Christristen, I'm going to mangle their names, I'm sorry, published a study in New Media and society that
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looked at Dramageddon 2.0. And again, Rhetoric, she's the star of this video,
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to be honest, has done a deep dive into Dramageddon 2.0. That is the beauty
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drama around James Charles. I don't actually follow beauty drama. I don't
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know why. It just just isn't a sort of thing. It's really fascinating. Someone should do a study on on what drama
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people follow because sometimes it's associated with something that you do in your life and sometimes it's just not.
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It's fascinating to think about what appeals to you and what doesn't. Anyway,
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back on topic. I was fascinated by this and what Lewis and Christine had done was look at many of the videos produced
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around the time and they conducted interviews with some of the creators. So they draw out especially the
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contradictory and complex nature of cancellation and call outs. On the one
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hand, creators want to ensure that their audience know the facts and are informed
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and that the person at the heart of the drama is called out for their behavior
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in the hope that they will change that behavior. However, creators are also aware that
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there are economic factors involved. A creator is conscious after monetization

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especially that they need to think about are they going to do a video about something? are they going to get onto
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this trend? Partly because they have an interest in it, partly because they need
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to remain monetized. That pressure becomes instant. It's something that I've been conscious of and feel a little
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bit strange about. Um I didn't realize it was all going to happen so fast. Now they are trying to
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deal and live with that tension between seeing a story as it unfolds and sharing
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the news and keeping the community informed and also the way that they
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benefit financially with views and subscribers. Now, of course, the fact that they benefit with the views and
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subscribers and the monetary gain allows them to continue to do a job that would
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otherwise not be done in this space. So, there is that to be aware of. But yeah,
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that's me being dragged on Maine, particularly because I was monetized. I
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was in the middle of working on a fellowship funding proposal that is partly built around finding creative
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ways to help people engage with archaeology in ancient world museum exhibits.
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So, it's my way of combating the absolute deluge in pseudoarchchaeology that we're facing without doing
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precisely what Flint Dibble and Milo Rossi have done. So, I don't feel
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entirely comfortable going on Joe Rogan to argue against Graeme Hancock. And I'm
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deeply grateful to Flint Dibble for doing that kind of thing. And also to Milo Rossy, who does these intense
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videos pushing back against creators who are sharing misinformation.
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Now, I'm still scared of being attacked by the mob. I think um obviously book lover Laura pointed out in one of her
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videos that the scandal around Audra had launched YouTube careers and it does put you in a tricky position because you're
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immediately faced with the tension around wanting to provide a contribution to the discourse that's valuable and not
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pile on recognizing that there is a human being at the heart of this but
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also effectively call out behavior that otherwise won't be seen or held accountable. So Lewis and Kristen
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highlight that YouTube drama illuminates important dynamics of the power
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struggles over accountability, morality, and authority taking place on social media. They also remarked that even
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though it would seem like there's a defined beginning and end to this, in fact, it's an ongoing process of
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reassessment and consideration. We saw this play out with Audra as many
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creators were initially sympathetic because they felt a certain connection to her youth and likely naivity.
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But how you behave after you do something like that, breaching community
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expectations strongly influences how the community interacts with you and which
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is why I've kept thinking about the need to apologize and take the financial aspect out of the situation. That has to
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go immediately because once that is on the table that is affecting people and
33:51
their ability to live and to some degree, you know, you have to take responsibility for your choices as
33:58
someone with money. Are you going to spend it on this creator whose writing you've never seen? But on the other
34:05
hand, if they have extended a promise in the terms of we will get you a book and then
34:11
they don't get you a book, that is another kettle of fish. The most important factor here is the space where
34:18

the most important factor to think about here is that this is the space where people who do not have much access to
34:24
the public sphere are able to have a voice and call out unacceptable behavior that can be received by an understanding
34:30
audience. And this is something that Lewis and Kristen highlight. They especially note that this is
34:37
important for marginalized voices, black, indigenous, LGBTQIA voices that are actively now being
34:44
silenced for much bigger reasons and who are more often the victims of these
34:49
kinds of events and are more marginalized in terms of their ability
34:55
to recoup financially, especially if they're caught up in a very, very big scam. Now, YouTube and social media more
35:02
generally present the opportunity for real push back against damaging behavior, you know, as well as thorough
35:08
investigations into misbehavior that right now especially just go on unchallenged. So, the very very top
35:13
level we have creators like Coffeezilla, that is Steven Molyneu, and he's also
35:19
Voidzilla. So, his channel had a problem a couple of years ago, and now he has a
35:24
second channel which also has millions of followers. He's right now embroiled in a long lawsuit with Logan Paul over
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what Logan Paul has been doing in the world. And he is one of the only people
35:37
who was prepared to call out Sam Bankman Freed in the point when things were
35:43
going wrong at FTX. And Sam decided to do a series of calls with a load of
35:50
journalists. Steven went on to all of those calls. He was the only one prepared to push back and challenge with
35:57
thoroughly researched and thoughtful questions that challenged Sam's truth
36:03
and what he was trying to claim. Now, if you're interested in that, you can also look up Zeke Forks book because Zeke

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Forks was also around and investigating NFTTS and crypto at that time and he
36:15
wrote a fantastic book about it. Robert Evans behind the bastards did a great deconstruction of how mainstream media
36:23
organizations like SEOA just kind of thought that SBF was amazing. And then
36:30
you have Michael Lewis, the author of The Big Short, who was writing effectively a he geography of SBF and
36:36
continued to be a supporter all the way through the legal case that followed.
36:44
That kind of possibility is presented by YouTube that people who are fully independent of established mainstream
36:51
media when they are working from an ethical framework can do amazing work in
36:58
the world and create change. We also have the work that H bomber guy who now
37:04
only needs to produce one video every couple of years and just hit like a bomb. Appropriate name. um he called out
37:12
James Summerton a couple of years ago and did a very deep dive on him and Illuminati. You can see how there is a
37:21
way for people to find a way to access restorative justice, to find a way to
37:27
access support when they are not able to do so via other means, particularly when
37:33
more financially capable creators are able to try to shut them down using the
37:40
law. Now, we've seen particularly this summer as well within the book community a series of conventions that all seem to
37:48
be either really, really poorly thought out bad decisions or they were scams. I
37:54
don't know. Either way, I'm going to try and skirt around. I know that there was
38:02
one which involved a case of SA. I think that is a far more serious issue that
38:08
I'm not going to cover here. But the conventions that have been covered by the YouTube community, sort of Swell
38:15

Entertainment has done some and Kiki Chanel interestingly has done a deep dive on her own particular fandom which
38:22
is the Vampire Diaries. And I wouldn't know about this uh as somebody in her
38:28
comments actually said, "Oh, wow. A 2-hour video deep dive on something I know nothing about which I'm prepared to
38:35
watch and engage with." And that engagement, even if you know nothing about it, becoming aware of it and being
38:42
making it part of the community discourse and often enables creators to
38:47
be held account in a way that they otherwise wouldn't be. These people are not held to account unless you have
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YouTube channels, multiple YouTube channels discussing the issue and
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raising the problems to a wider audience. And just by watching the video
39:06
and engaging with it, you are participating in ensuring that there is
39:12
a better chance of there being restorative justice. I'm going to mention why I keep mentioning
39:17
restorative justice in a little bit. Now on a much smaller scale we have goal
39:22
world um which is where I have to hold up my hand and say yeah this is how bad it gets when I am deeply deeply stressed
39:29
when I am deep into marking territory and I have had to mark 10 almost
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identical essays in a day and you know my brain just completely melts. If anyone watches this
39:42
and you have ever had to grade university undergraduate papers, you
39:48
will know what I'm talking about. You have the cur world horror. There's a positive and there's the negative. Does
39:54
it even work? Does highlighting what people do when they misbehave online,
40:00
does it have any particular effect? Now, as I mentioned before, Christian talk
40:05
about how it's complicated and you have these endless reconsiderations. You have the one-offs where someone comes and
40:10

they do something bad and then they apologize and then they go away and they just disappear. And then they might come
40:16
back in a couple of years. They might try things again. It might go well, it might not go well. We'll we'll get to
40:23
that. Literally just this week, just the day before I'm recording this, another drama um from someone who has been
40:29
offline because of previous drama and has come back and just done the worst thing. While I was sweating over my
40:35
catalog essay in the summer, things went utterly bonkers in Gworld. Um, I find drama fascinating to watch. Partly
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because no matter how much fiction you read, people will always be weirder in
40:47
real life. People will always do like the most unexpected thing. I've got a
40:52
feeling that if someone did the plot of some people's lives and
40:59
they wrote it up as a book and tried to pitch it, people would just look at that in the publishing world and just go,
41:05
"No, there's no way anyone would do that." And I'm like, "Go and look at Girl World. It's happening on the regular." I find it very confusing the
41:13
way people behave. And as an autistic person, I am fascinated because I don't understand it. I wonder also if one of
41:21
the reasons why drama particularly now has become more interesting to people is
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because mainstream entertainment has become so boring and repetitive. I don't
41:32
care about the 800th Marvel movie or series coming out. But but did you hear
41:37
about how Shantel um she stole a cat for a grift in QA,
41:43
got called out by a cat charity and then ends up in Syria.
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I actually took that to my therapist. This is me going off script. I went to my therapist and I said, "Yeah, I'm
41:56
really struggling. I'm I'm I'm watching drama content. I'm sorry." And then said, "Did you know she's gone to Syria?"

42:03
Uh yeah, she's trying to get her audience to pay for her to get out of Syria. Now,
42:10
um, Milk Tea actually did a really good react video and at one point she talks
42:15
about the issues around bringing things and making them financial and it is well
42:21
worth looking at that and how she analyzes and discusses the issue of
42:27
trying to make your audience pay for things which is worryingly close to what
42:33
Audra has been doing now. And then we have the problem of other people who
42:39
become so huge that no amount of calling out does any good whatsoever. We have
42:44
the Mr. Beast AI thing which I have not been following but just know horror for
42:50
all the work done by creators to call out people. There are the serial problematic cases.
42:57
The no amount of calling out Logan Paul has worked up until now. And on the
43:04
micro scale of Gore World and book, creators who do this seem to be able to kind of keep it going. They will always
43:10
have a small fan base that just seems to support them regardless of what they do and regardless of how many reactors say
43:16
to them, she is or he is doing things that are harming you. They don't care
43:23
about you. They just want your money and they will do anything to get it in my
43:28
opinion. And then of course we have the go away and comeback. Fulmer. This is
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just in the last couple of days. I decide to spend a week doing YouTube videos and then this happens. It all
43:41
goes off at once. Fulmer, one of the try guys who was the wife guy and he made
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having a wife his whole personality and then it turned out that he had cheated on her and he has now done a podcast
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that is him interviewing his wife about the fact that he cheated on her. It's
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dark and awful. And I did watch some of the Penguin Zero commentary on it and
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some of the other people who have commented on it. And this seems to be what happens is that once people enter
44:13
the pipeline from being a reasonable creator to being unreasonable, the Try
44:19
Guy has tried to come back. Bad joke. It has not worked. It is very, very bad.
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We see an inability to really step back from what you want as a creator and
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think about the audience and what you are doing for the audience and how you
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benefit the community when you come back and not just think of it in terms of this benefits me I'm fine I don't really
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care about anybody else. James Summerton actually does seem to have been fully
44:52
cancelled. I've seen a couple of places where people have said, "Oh, he's trying to come back." But I haven't seen
44:58
anything. Now, here's where we get to the restorative justice bit because the last
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couple of weeks, I follow Matthew Fatani on threads. He is well worth following
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as a researcher. I believe he has just lost funding because he's based in the
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States. and now we're facing this critical issue of funding loss to vital research across both the sciences and
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the humanities. But he shared some research that suggests that people on social media
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consider restorative justice more effective means of handling misbehavior than vigilante behavior. So I will link
45:34
to the study down below, but it suggests that overall people want to see a positive outcome when people break
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social, cultural or evil legal codes. We don't as a species seem to be we don't
45:47
want to push people out unless they really have breached and show no signs
45:52
of wanting to come back into community and to behave appropriately and I think that is why we pull punches and it is
45:59
why we extend trust to people at least initially. So that's you know one potential explanation for that question

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particularly in the case of order. If you keep pushing the limits of that trust and you violate that trust and
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those ethical codes then that kindness runs out to go back to order and whether
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it was a scam from the start that we can't know. That's my take. I honestly
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think if a student had come to me at this point where she is, I would say just massively apologize honestly as one
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single human being. Forget the team talk. Forget the I'm the next Tim Cook.
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I'm the next Elizabeth Holmes. And just say I am so sorry that I did this. I'm I
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have let you all down and then step off the internet for several years. Come back later. Get a job. Do the naturalist
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thing. do something else. The problem that we have in the drama
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space, very much with things like that, particularly because creators can withdraw, is that we only see a fraction
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of the information that's available. And we have relatively few facts compared to how much we can speculate. So, we can't
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see behind the scenes. We can't see the discussions and decisions that are being made. And we have a desire to speculate.
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We want to fill in the gaps. We love a mystery. I think this is partly why we like drama is we love a mystery. We want
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to see how things unfold. We want to understand it. I've seen some people
47:37
suggest that it was a scam from the start. I tend to stick to the maxim that
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you should avoid ascribing to malice what could reasonably be explained by
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stupidity and bad decision- making. I don't know what Audra's background is in
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terms of finances. It looks like on the surface a series of really, really poor decisions that haven't been thought out.
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Nobody around her seems to be paying attention to how these situations play
48:06

out, how to manage these situations effectively, and really how to think about Audra as a
48:13
person and what in her as an individual might appeal to the audience and win
48:18
back that trust. Now, I happened to stop here and I
48:23
started scrolling, you know, as you do. And the first thing to pop up was a study released today, today on the
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personality traits that affect your ability to handle negative feedback. And I thought, "Oh, I know. I'm going to put
48:36
this in." So, I'm going to link to the article and the journal study in the description. It suggests that when you
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have a very strong particular self-concept, that can make it harder to accept critical feedback. So, I will
48:51
read you the abstract. When faced with self- threat, people often engage in
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self-protective reactions. Yet, not everyone does. The extent to which
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self-p protection occurs is thought to depend on pe people's personality.
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We put this claim to test by considering multiple personality traits from different content domains. In an
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experiment, participants number 1,744. So, a reasonably large study performed a
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bogus performance test and received negative versus positive feedback. As an indicator of self-protective reactions,
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we assessed participants tendency to question the validity of the test. We
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found that high self-esteem and high narcissism predicted stronger self-protective reactions, particularly
49:41
when these traits were assessed in the content domain targeted by the negative feedback.
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So that is anything particularly associated with
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people's self-identity tends to be more triggered than something that isn't
49:58
closely tied to your selfidentity. Contrary to our hypothesis, the
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self-insight motive and mindfulness also predicted stronger and not weaker
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self-protective reactions. That is fascinating. That is fascinating and it
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does make the study well worth reading because it means that it's really important to consider when you think you
50:24
have personal insight. Do you have personal insight or are you perpetuating
50:29
an image of yourself and your own mythology about who you are? This goes
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back to my first video on the order problem of the gulf between how you are
50:41
being received and how you view yourself and when that comes up as a problem.
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That's something to bear in mind that we actually have to be really careful that we might not be as insightful about
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ourselves as we think and that thinking that you're insightful about yourself and your reactions is possibly part of
51:02
your self- mythology. Be careful out there. It is like it's kind of scary because mindfulness is generally seen as
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a a means by which people become more self-aware and they become able to handle situations better. Obviously,
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that might not be so true. Now, I'm cautious about throwing around terms we can't diagnose from a distance. I see,
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you know, the word narcissism used an awful lot and it has been used for Audra, although I think that a lot of
51:30
her communication is highly impacted by being autistic
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and is part of a tendency in autistic individuals. Certainly something that I
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used to suffer from. Many of my commenters said that they saw themselves in those kind of reactions.
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I think most of what we have seen since the initial fallout from the book is
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probably mostly down to self-protective mechanisms compounded by the need to
52:00
deal with financial problems that ensue. She made a series of bad decisions even

52:07
in the runup. I think she gave up her job. She was using her scholarship to
52:12
fund all of this. And while she's trying to be ethical on the surface, the anti-
52:20
AI stance doesn't sit well with the tech bro Texas aesthetic at all. Now, on a
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personal level, as an author and a writer, I'm entirely baffled because
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that aesthetic does not fit with the mode of an author or a creative. Now
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authors, no matter how big they get, engage with their audience as individuals. That's the rhetoric of even
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Stephen King, you know, comes out and says something and will contribute and say things back to him. The idea of
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calling this, oh, the world of Guardian LLC, particularly at the moment when we
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are all cancelling our Disney subscriptions and dealing with big
53:05
corporations bowing to authoritarian rule. All of this feels like why would
53:12
you want to deploy that aesthetic? Have you thought in any way about why you are
53:18
deploying that aesthetic? you know, it doesn't feel like a good choice. I'm really intrigued actually by the
53:24
decision to do that. So, I mean, you know, people become fans of brands.
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That's a thing that people do. You know, people are massive fans as of Apple as a brand and that's a different form of
53:38
social engagement around products. People are fans of PlayStation. People
53:43
are fans of Xbox. people develop attachments to things and to brands. But
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she was smart in realizing very early on that people respond to visual content
53:57
more than they do to written content because you can just see it and go, "Well, that looks good, therefore it
54:02
must be good." I think she does have this dream of being a massively successful published. I suspect that the
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use of all of these terms like team and the weird fact that the numbers keep changing. It's all very strange is just
54:18
part of trying to make the dream happen without having the underlying book. That
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is what everybody really wanted in the first place. Going back to sort of being in my early 20ies, it's weird. You have
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all of your life in front of you and you think everything has to happen right now because it's all got to be instant and
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you want to get it sorted out and figured out now 46 nearly 47 still having not figured anything out. I mean
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when I was 24 25 and writing the original Amnar series yeah I I wanted it
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to be huge and do something enormous and have a big impact.
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It does feel like that's important at the time. The benefit of getting older is going actually I have less time but
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somehow it's more meaningful and that you do have time to do things. Now there's a great video by Lind D. Yung
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about the problem of the prodigy and the tendency to think that you need to do things very young in order to be
55:18
special. It turns out that prodigies just start earlier. By the time you are an adult, you are just like everybody
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else. I don't know if anyone watches this and is a fan of the series Numbers. I was a huge fan of the series Numbers,
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which is two brothers, one of whom is a police officer and the other one is a numbers genius at a university who is a
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mathematics prodigy or he was and they are solving crimes. So, you know, great
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premise and he is struggling with the fact that he's an adult and he became a
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professor really, really young, but he's now just average because everybody else caught up with him. And this is
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something that Lynn brings out in her video is that actually we obsess over the idea of people being able to do

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things really young and that that obscures the reality of the benefits of being older. I say being an older
56:08
person, so justifying my existence. Now, my personal suspicion is that pretty
56:13
much everything since the fallout from the publication has been a desperate scramble for financial survival. Um, she
56:19
did mention quitting her job, using her scholarship money to fund what she was doing, and that's potentially left her
56:26
in a difficult position financially. It is not down to the fans to solve that
56:32
problem. Absolutely. Honestly, it is not down to fans or anyone to support to get
56:38
someone out of that financial hole. As we're seeing in Go World right now, the same thing applies first time, 10th time
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you do this. You have to go away and solve the problem. Either you put out really, really excellent content for
56:50
people or you go away and you find another way to solve that financial problem. I'm sort of done with the drama
56:56
now. I'm going to talk just just a little bit just a couple of notes that I picked up. Possibly shouldn't be doing
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this. I'm not dunking. I think it is interesting to have a little bit of look at what she has posted, but this is not
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this is me talking about being an author and thinking about that kind of things. I like the idea that Stephven King
57:17
suggests in on writing and I have some critique with his stuff, but I liked his
57:24
idea that you should do the whole book with the doors closed and you just you get it to a state that you think is
57:29
good. It has to be complete. It has to have gone through all the revisions that mean that your inner perfectionist is
57:36
happy with it and or at least they don't absolutely hate it. And then you open
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the door and you take it to people that you trust. And then after you've taken it to people that you trust and taken on board that feedback, you start spreading
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out further and further and you widen the circle very gradually. Just expanding the circle to anyone who is
57:53
prepared to pay means you're going to get all kinds of people showing up and giving you opinions. If you're still at
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a developmental stage, which the age of Scorpius is absolutely still at a very
58:05
early developmental stage, you're just going to get all kinds of different pieces of feedback and not all of them
58:10
will be useful or what you want to have received. It's very tricky. To make this
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all about me, uh, I entered a competition over the summer that would have involved a public vote. People who
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were shortlisted were notified over the weekend and I didn't receive an email, so I'm assuming I didn't get it. I had
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submitted the first 1,500 words of Bone Moth and I was sort of hoping it would
58:34
go somewhere. And then there was another part of me that was going, "You don't stand a chance." Then another part of me
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that only popped up when I didn't get an email was very relieved
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that something that was really unready to be seen by the general public was not
58:51
going to get put on display. I was very concerned that it would stop me writing.
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There are enough challenges in my life right now. I am in freshest week. So, we
59:02
start teaching in week one and week two. And yeah, I I've got enough on my plate
59:08
without dealing with the public voting or not voting or having comments or
59:13
thoughts or wanting to give me feedback on a very early draft of something that has
59:20
changed in the couple of months since I actually submitted my entry. I was
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submitting because I was going for every chance I possibly could, but looking back, I'm kind of glad that I didn't get

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anywhere. Also sad that I didn't get anywhere because the emotions are kind of complicated either way. You want to and you don't want to. I had a look at
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order stuff and that is very much an author sort of take. Do appreciate the
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drama people leaving at this point. I was intrigued the first chapter. I'm
59:54
gonna I have just one comment and I think everybody has brought this up is they're talking about the absence of the
1:00:01
main character from a lot of it is descriptive. The critical thing with
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first pages and your first paragraph, your first line is having somebody
1:00:13
there, having a person we can attach to. I am not sure why I'm supposed to care
1:00:20
at all about conviction woods. Who cares? I don't I don't care that it's uninhabitable. That happens to places.
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Why should I care about this place? Trick is one brought up by Donald Mars
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who is one of the leading lights of literary agency. He does courses with
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writer's digest and he has written several books. One of them is the emotional craft of fiction which is a
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really useful read. He explains how to do description really well by embedding it within a character. to go back to
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favorite favorite thing up here. The first chapter of The Hobbit and the Lord
1:00:58
of the Rings start off with this kind of explanation of hobbits introduces but starts with a character. They all start
1:01:05
with a character. Now, it doesn't necessarily have to be in media res. Um,
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that's a great way of getting people engaged, but you need to have a person who is
1:01:17
experiencing what you're describing in order to make it effective. Donald Mars presents some ideas for doing that, for
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showing that when you describe a place, you must describe it from the perspective of that person, of that
1:01:31

character. What are they looking at? How does it make them feel? What things do they miss? What things do they notice?
1:01:37
That's always going to be the most fundamental thing. So, that was what primarily came up for me when I had a
1:01:44
look at the first chapter. I still have a lot of things to say as an epigrapher
1:01:50
that I will leave potentially for another video because she is telling a story that is essentially in my
1:01:56
wheelhouse. The main character is essentially does what I do. Hey, the
1:02:01
other thing that this second update from that perspective was kind of
1:02:08
interesting. Looking at the handwritten outline, I noticed again that it's very
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much about what happens and not much about why things happen. Why is this all
1:02:22
happening? Why does it matter? Why doesn't she Why does Rowan not believe
1:02:27
Reika at first? What's going on there? Why is there remuse?
1:02:33
What is even happening? There seems to be a lot of what and not why. I don't
1:02:38
know why you'd want an illustrated notebook of the history. History's just from an academic standpoint and as
1:02:45
someone who is currently writing a dark academia book set in a a world that is kind of figuring out a missing patch of
1:02:51
their own history, you kind of need to have lots of different sources of
1:02:56
material. That's going to be a video for another time where I talk about all the different sources of material we have to
1:03:02
understand just one aspect of our own past and our own history and how difficult it is to interpret these
1:03:08
things. Those were just my notes that just there's a continual feeling that
1:03:14
theme is missing. The sense that the characters do things without any sense of why they do those things and why they
1:03:21
react the way they do. that's still absent from it. And that kind of makes

1:03:26
me think, oh, you're not there yet. You've got a long way to go. Again, I still wish she would just go offline.
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Quite frankly, it it's kind of difficult to watch. I find it difficult to watch
1:03:39
at times. That's why I've been doing other things and focusing on the Mins and Ancient Magic, which I will come
1:03:45
back to just as an update. I am spending all of this week doing videos that I
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hope to get a better schedule because I kind of do want to do this. I I you
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know, you're great people. You're you're fascinated by stuff. You tell me really interesting things. I learned so much
1:04:02
from the comment section. It's amazing. So, you know, like, comment, subscribe,
1:04:08
do the thing. I'm very cautious. Don't, you know, there's no need to do the Patreon thing. I do put out videos. I'm
1:04:15
trying to do like little update videos just to get better at doing videos and um there is that there. There's a lot of
1:04:22
bone moth type stuff. So, if you're interested in my actual writing, that's that. Uh I've got ideas to do videos on
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um hypernormalization, which is something I'm fascinated by. Russia surviving um the collapse of communism
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and how that is applicable to right now. Obviously, ancient medicine and magic.
1:04:44
So, you know, that's all coming up as long as I am able to focus for the rest of this week. Thank you very much for
1:04:52
coming along and listening to my talk. I'm will try to make these videos much
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more regular and keep working on my editing skills. So, thank you very much for watching and

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